

# Responding to any Disaster Requires a Unified Trained Public Health Workforce

**MAY, 2004**  
**tornadoes struck Lancaster County**

*"The May tornadoes tested our county's ability to respond to a large scale natural disaster. The result was a unified command structure that involved emergency management personnel, public health, law enforcement, fire, safety and rescue staff and volunteers! The Health Department staff played a vital role on the unified command team. They knew what had to be done and got the job accomplished."*

Doug Ahlberg, Director  
Lancaster County  
Emergency Management



Public Health Nurses gave over 750 shots for tetanus in Hallam, Norris School and other rural communities.



Animal Control officers picked up over 50 different pets, got them into shelters and helped reunite them with their owners.



At least twenty wells, including this old community well in Hallam, were decommissioned.



Numerous buildings were inspected for environmental and safety risks.



More than 25,000 pounds of hazardous and toxic materials were collected, sorted and removed by public health staff.

Extensive training assisted the Health Department staff in a quick and collaborative response to the May tornadoes. Since the events of September 11, the Health Department has taken a more aggressive approach to preparing and responding to any catastrophic event, whether it be man-made or a natural disaster.